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SUBJECT: JAPANESE MORNING PRESS HIGHLIGHTS 03/25/09

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#### Articles:

1) Three cabinet ministers to meet today to determine response to North Korean missile

SANKEI (Page 5) (Full)  
March 25, 2009

The government decided yesterday to hold a meeting today of three cabinet ministers -- the chief cabinet secretary, foreign minister, and defense minister -- to determine Japan's response to North Korea's planned launch of an improved version of the Taepodong-2 long-range ballistic missile, which the North claims to be a satellite. This was revealed yesterday by Chief Cabinet Secretary Takeo Kawamura at the North Korean missile task force of the Liberal Democratic Party and the New Komeito.

The meeting is expected to determine the positioning in the Sea of Japan of the Aegis vessels carrying the SM-3 sea-based intercept missiles and of the PAC-3 ground-to-air guided missiles and explanations to local governments and the people. The problem is that while the Defense Ministry is calling for a prior cabinet decision under the Self-Defense Forces Law Article 82-2 that specifies missile destruction steps, the Prime Minister's Office

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(Kantei) and the Foreign Ministry are reluctant to do so. This could be a point at issue.

2) Gov't to issue missile destruction order March 27

ASAHI (Page 4) (Abridged)  
March 25, 2009

In the wake of North Korea's recent proclamation of plans to launch an "artificial satellite," the government has decided to hold a meeting of the Security Council of Japan (SCJ) on March 27 and issue a "ballistic missile destruction order" to the Self-Defense Forces under the Self-Defense Forces Law, with Prime Minister Aso presiding. Chief Cabinet Secretary Kawamura, Foreign Minister Nakasone, and Defense Minister Hamada will meet today to confirm final procedures for the government to issue the destruction order.

The ballistic missile destruction order is to be issued in two cases: 1) when a launched ballistic missile is feared to land in Japan, the defense minister will issue the order with a cabinet decision; or 2) a launched ballistic missile is not feared to land in Japan, but in preparation for an emergency, the defense minister will issue the order beforehand without making it public in principle.

The government says the projectile in question-if it flies as announced by North Korea-will only pass over the northeastern region of Japan, so the government takes the position that it cannot go so far as to say the missile will land in Japan. With this account, the government will choose the second option. However, the government will hold a SCJ meeting to confirm its intention, instead of leaving the matter only to the defense minister from the perspective of placing emphasis on civilian control and information disclosure. After going through that procedure, the chief cabinet secretary will meet the press and on March 27 to make public the government's missile destruction order and its plans to deploy the SDF's missile defense (MD) system, including the Patriot Advanced Capability 3 (PAC-3), a land-based ground-to-air guided missile for missile interception.

#### Hit uncertainty

Even if the ballistic missile destruction order is issued, the question is whether it is possible to intercept a launched ballistic

missile. "I don't think we can hit it" This remark came from a government source on March 23. Foreign Minister Nakasone, meeting the press yesterday, also admitted that it would be difficult. As seem from such remarks, government officials are getting out of step with each other. "They're lacking a sense of tension," said a ruling party lawmaker, criticized such remarks.

The Standard Missile 3 (SM-3), a sea-based surface-to-air intercept missile, successfully hit a mock-up target in a preannounced launch test. In an unannounced launch test that was carried out in 2008, however, the SM-3 lost its target and failed to shoot it down. North Korea has announced its plan to launch a "satellite" in the day time between April 4 and 8. However, North Korea has not specified what time it will launch it.

If a satellite launched by North Korea falls on Japan, that is the case where there was something wrong with it. "We cannot calculate its ordinary trajectory in that case and it will be difficult to

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intercept the missile." With this, a senior official of the Defense Ministry voiced concern. Kazuhisa Ogawa, a military analyst, also told the Asahi Shimbun: "If the missile normally falls, it's possible to intercept that missile to some degree. But if the missile is off course, it's quite uncertain."

### 3) All eyes on intercept missile's accuracy

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)  
March 25, 2009

Can the Self-Defense Forces' missile defense (MD) system intercept North Korea's ballistic missile? North Korea is now preparing to launch a ballistic missile in the name of an "artificial satellite." On this issue, however, a government source raised a question about its accuracy, saying, "It's impossible to hit the target." All eyes are on the MD system and its accuracy.

The MD system is a double-decker shoot-down system to intercept a ballistic missile. After a missile is launched, the SPY-1 radar of an Aegis-equipped vessel calculates that missile's trajectory in an instant, based on intelligence data from a U.S. early warning satellite. If a launched missile is likely to land in Japan's territorial soil or waters, the Standard Missile 3 (SM-3), a sea-based surface-to-air guided missile mounted on a Maritime Self-Defense Force Aegis destroyer, will intercept that missile in outer space. If the SM-3 fails to shoot it down, the Patriot Advanced Capability 3 (PAC-3), a land-based ground-to-air missile, will destroy it. A ballistic missile, once launched, will reach Japan in about 10 minutes. The time before landing in Japan is short, so if a destruction order is already issued as stipulated in the SDF law's Article 82-2 provision, an SDF base commander on the front will issue directions to intercept the missile.

The PAC-3 was used in the 2003 Iraq war. At that time, U.S. forces mobilized PAC-3 batteries and successfully hit all targets within the intercept scope, according to the U.S. government's account. The SM-3 was successful in 13 of 16 intercept tests conducted by U.S. forces and in one of two tests carried out by the MSDF. By simple arithmetic, the hit probability is about 80 PERCENT . The MD system's targeting accuracy is "considerably high," as explained by the government so far.

However, Japan's MD system is aimed primarily at countering North Korea's intermediate-range ballistic missiles and is incapable of intercepting a normally flying long-range ballistic missile. From the first, such a long-range ballistic missile will not land in Japan. The missile announced by North Korea is believed to be a long-range ballistic missile. The MD system is expected to intercept such a long-range ballistic missile if its launch ends in failure or in some other possible cases. In the case of a launched ballistic missile that becomes uncontrollable before going into outer space, however, it is very difficult to calculate its trajectory, according to a senior official of the Defense Ministry.

The government will hold a meeting of three cabinet ministers today,

with the chief cabinet secretary, the defense minister, and the foreign minister attending. In this cabinet ministerial meeting, the government will decide to issue a missile destruction order to the SDF. The ballistic missile or its components are feared to fall on Japan, but a government source says its possibility is "extremely low." The government is therefore expected to "issue a destruction

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order without a cabinet decision" or a procedure allowed to be taken "in preparation for an emergency." The missile in question, if it flies as announced by North Korea, will pass over the prefectures of Akita and Iwate. So, after the missile destruction order is issued, the PAC-3, currently deployed to the Air Self-Defense Force's Hamamatsu base in Shizuoka Prefecture, will be moved to the Ground Self-Defense Force's Akita and Iwate garrisons.

The PAC-3's defensive scope is within a radius of several dozen kilometers, so its mobilization to the two prefectures is intended to cover local cities on a priority basis. The Defense Ministry will hold a briefing today in Sendai City for officials from the six northeastern prefectures and Sendai City. The PAC-3 is currently deployed to five other SDF bases throughout the country, in addition to Hamamatsu.

4) Confusion in government over MD ability to intercept a rocket from North Korea

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Abridged)  
March 25, 2009

Views were split in the government yesterday over whether the missile defense (MD) system would be able to intercept a ballistic missile coming from North Korea. Some officials have raised questions about MD capability. Discussion of this question is likely to linger on for a while.

The controversy was triggered by a remark by a government official on March 23. The official told reporters: "You cannot shoot down a bullet fired by a pistol by firing another pistol at it."

In a press conference yesterday, Defense Minister Yasukazu Hamada disputed the official's claim: "We have been trying to be well prepared. I think he does not fully understand the contents." In a meeting of the Liberal Democratic Party's National Defense Division, too, one participant claimed: "That is a (diplomatically) negative statement," and another asserted: "That is totally an undignified remark."

Speaking before reporters last night, Prime Minister Aso also emphasized: "It is the government's role to make utmost efforts, including MD, to prevent the people from falling into harms way."

Behind the eagerness of the prime minister and others to put out the fire is the fact that more than 700 billion yen has been injected in the MD project.

Furthermore, the government has indicated that it would intercept an incoming missile, with the aim of dissuading North Korea from launching a missile. This purpose will not be attained if it is clearly said that the MD is incapable of intercepting a missile.

But Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone said in a press conference yesterday: "It probably is difficult (to intercept a missile)," confirming the government official's remark in effect. Since the MD intercept test in November 2008 ended in failure, the foreign minister's statement has made the debate in the government more heated.

5) Japan, U.S., South Korea to hold missile talks on March 27

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SANKEI (Page 9) (Abridged)  
March 25, 2009

(Takashi Arimoto, Washington)

Japan, the U.S., and South Korea have decided to hold a trilateral meeting in Washington on March 27 to discuss how to deal with the expected launch of the Taepodong-2, a long-range ballistic missile, according to a source involved in the six-party talks. North Korea announced that it was preparing to launch a satellite, but some countries believe the launch to be a missile test-firing. The three countries are expected to discuss such issues as whether to adopt a new UN Security Council (UNSC) resolution. Meanwhile, in an attempt to apply pressure to moves by the three countries, Pyongyang issued a statement of its Foreign Ministry spokesman on March 24, reading: "If a hostile act is taken, the existence of the six-party talks will become meaningless." This statement was reported by the Korean Central News Agency.

The chief negotiators for the six-party talks of the three countries will meet for the first time since the Obama administration was inaugurated. Participating in the meeting will be Foreign Ministry's Asia-Oceanian Affairs Bureau Director General Akitaka Saiki, U.S. Special Envoy for the six-party talks Sung Kim, and South Korean Foreign Affairs and Trade Ministry's Korean Peninsula Peace Negotiations Head Wae Song-nak. By holding a trilateral meeting prior to the expected launch of a "satellite," the three countries apparently aim to demonstrate their united stance and take joint steps after a rocket is fired.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has revealed an intention to look into such measures as a UNSC resolution criticizing it if the North launches a projectile. Clinton, though, has also indicated the need to resume the six-party talks at an early to promote North Korea's denuclearization.

But Japan and other countries have insisted that the six-party talks should not be resumed while setting aside the missile issue, based on the view that it is difficult to treat the six-party talks and the missile issue separately.

6) North Korea hints it will not join six-party talks, hoping to deter UN from adopting sanction resolution after "satellite" launch

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 7) (Full)  
March 25, 2009

Eiji Tsukiyama, Seoul

In the event the UN Security Council adopts a sanction resolution following Pyongyang's planned launch of a satellite rocket between April 4 and 8, the North Korean Foreign Ministry indicated yesterday that it would not attend the six-party talks on the nuclear issue. A spokesman said the multilateral forum would lose its basis and significance for existence. The Korean Central News Agency reported this yesterday as a statement by a Foreign Ministry spokesman.

Japan, the United States, and South Korea earlier insisted that the launch of a "satellite" would violate UN Security Council Resolution 1718, and called on North Korea to halt all activities related to ballistic missile programs. The North Korean statement was apparently intended to apply pressure on the move centering on Japan

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that aims to have the UN pass a sanction resolution.

North Korea's Foreign Ministry noted in the statement: "Japan's and the United States' attempt to interfere with the right of our country, a sovereign state, to use space for peaceful purposes completely runs counter to the 'spirit of mutual respect and equality' specified in the (September 2005) joint statement of the six-party talks. If such a hostile activity is carried out under the name of the UN Security Council, it would be a breach of the joint statement."

At the same time, the North criticized Japan regarding the UNSC's move, saying, "Japan is spearheading an anti-Republic (North Korea) drive." It also asserted that if the six-party talks collapsed,

countries that rejected the joint statement, including Japan, would be held responsible. The statement also indicated that the North would continue pursuing nuclear development, saying, "If hostile relations cannot be resolved through dialogue, we have no choice but to bolster our power to deter hostile activity."

7) Six-party talks will resume even after missile launch, says U.S. Charge d'Affaires

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 7) (Full)  
March 25, 2009

American Embassy Charge d'Affaires ad interim James. P. Zumwalt held a roundtable meeting with reporters in Tokyo yesterday. Referring to a response to North Korea's planned launch of a missile or a satellite, Zumwalt took a stance at aiming at resumption of the six-party talks, while exercising a certain degree of restraint. "We don't want to take a step that would make the six-party talks (on North Korea's denuclearization) impossible to resume," he said

While expressing concern that if the North carried out the launch, it would make it even more difficult for talks to resume, Zumwalt announced Washington's intention to continue making diplomatic efforts in order to block the launch.

Given the Obama administration's positive stance toward a dialogue with North Korea, he also described the planned launch as "not constructive." Zumwalt also said that the United States "still has hopes" that the ongoing efforts to dissuade the North from launching a projectile would succeed.

He stopped short of discussing in detail what the UN Security Council and other bodies would do in reaction to the launch.

8) Ozawa's secretary indicted for falsely reporting 35 million yen as donations from Nishimatsu

ASAHI (Top Play) (Full)  
March 25, 2009

The special investigation squad of the Tokyo District Public Prosecutors Office yesterday indicted Takanori Okubo, 47, the first state-paid secretary and chief accountant of Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Ichiro Ozawa, for violating the Political Funds Control Law by falsely reporting 35 million yen as donations from the second-tier general contractor, Nishimatsu Construction Co. Okubo was arrested on suspicion of receiving illegal donations from Nishimatsu. The special investigation squad intends to continue its

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investigations into the fundraising scandal in order to shed light on other illegal donations.

The indictment states that Okubo falsely reported 21 million yen from the two political bodies headed by former Nishimatsu officials in Rikuzankai's political reports for 2003 through 2006 as legal donations despite being aware that the donation was illegal. The Political Funds Control Law bans companies from making contributions to individual politicians, as well as from using a different person's name.

Okubo is in charge of controlling the accounting of the DPJ Iwate No. 4 electoral district chapter. He reportedly falsely reported 14 million yen in donations the Iwate chapter had received in political fund reports for 2003 through 2006.

Tokyo prosecutors appear to have judged there was a high-level of criminality about the donations, since Okubo had allegedly done favors for Nishimatsu in return for its donations by manipulating the bids for large-scale public works projects in the Tohoku region.

The prosecutors also indicted former Nishimatsu President Mikio Kunisawa, 70, in violation of the Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Act, and indicted again him for violating the Political Funds Control Law. Another man arrested in the case, Akifumi Okazaki, 67,

a former senior employee of Nishimatsu, was released without charge.

9) DPJ President Ozawa to remain in his post for time being, some party members calling for resignation

ASAHI (Page 1) (Full)  
March 25, 2009

Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Ichiro Ozawa, in party executive meetings hastily called last night, revealed his intention to stay on in his current post for the time being, although his first state-funded secretary was indicted over a fundraising scandal. In a press conference held after the meetings, Ozawa stressed: "I would like to continue make efforts to achieve a power shift." Although many DPJ lawmakers are going along with Ozawa's bid to continue serving as party leader, the view was raised in the executive meetings that Ozawa's explanation on the scandal would not gain public understanding. Therefore, there is a possibility that he will be forced in the end to quit his post.

Ozawa has been criticizing the prosecutors for unfairly using their authority by focusing only on the DPJ. In yesterday's press conference, he emphasized again his innocence, since no new information about the donation scandal (linking him directly) had emerged. He expressed his unhappiness with the arrest and indictment of his secretary, saying: "I am not convinced."

Ozawa stated:

"My final role as a politician is to bring about politics that will stand on the side of people by throwing out the coalition government of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and New Komeito."

However, his strong desire to remain in his post was not felt. Since Ozawa failed to give concrete explanations of the scandal, one

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member raised the point that he should fulfill his accountability.

Ozawa met last night with Deputy President Naoto Kan, Secretary General Yukio Hatoyama and Azuma Koshiishi, chairman of the DPJ caucus in the House of Councillors, where he conveyed his intention to remain in his post. Hatoyama told the press corps:

"Since he has decided to continue serving as party leader, he has no other choice but to make efforts to gain public understanding. I think he will come under criticism from various circles."

A rocky road still lies ahead for Ozawa. There is growing concern that the DPJ has been seriously damaged by the series of reports on the fundraising scandal. The view might spread that the party won't be able to go into the next general election under Ozawa's leadership if his explanations are not accepted by the public. Some junior lawmakers have already called for replacing the party leader.

Ozawa indicated his intention in the press conference to judge again his fate depending on public opinion. He intends to seek understanding in a meeting on March 27 from the party members from both Diet houses. Although many observers predict that he will be forced to step down from his post sooner or later, in the DPJ, that is taken to mean that Ozawa will stay on in his post for a while.

10) Wide gap between Ozawa's and voters' perceptions of receiving huge political donations

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 1) (Full)  
March 25, 2009

In the illegal fund-raising case involving Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Ichiro Ozawa, the focus of prosecutors' investigation was on the allegation that his political-fund organization had falsely reported the amount of 35 million yen in its funds statement. The reported amount is smaller than those in past offenses against the Political Funds Control Law.

In actually, though, the Ozawa office received more than 300 billion yen over the past ten years or so. On the strength of strong influence over construction projects in the Tohoku District, the Ozawa side siphoned off donations from general contractors, it has been revealed through news investigations in the region. But Ozawa has not given any convincing explanation about this allegation.

The way of raising political funds is an essential material for the voters to decide whom they should elect, as was seen in the fact that many cabinet ministers resigned over office expense scandals in the past. The Political Funds Control Law used to contain many loopholes, so the law has been amended many times to tighten regulations. The act of false reporting is subject to the punishment of a maximum prison term of five years. The Ozawa side might be taking the view that the problem can be settled with just rewriting the funds statement. If that is so, their perception widely deviates from that of the electorate.

Considering the impact on the upcoming general election, the prosecution usually decides in a cautious manner when it should start an investigation. Some persons have criticized the launching of this investigation prior to the next general election.

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Tokyo District Public Prosecutors Office special investigation unit head Tatsuya Sakuma in a press conference yesterday stated:

"When considering the unprincipled nature of this case, we judged it undesirable to leave it untouched until after the House of Representatives election takes place in the fall. We never take action based on a certain political intentions."

But a senior prosecutor commented: "We might have misread public opinion." The prosecution got caught in a backlash. Many people might interpret the prosecution's "justice" as "self-righteousness" that might obstruct the first opportunity for voters to choose one of the two main political parties.

The prosecution also needs to provide a detailed explanation in order to dispel the doubts about it harbored by many people.

11) "DPJ lacks self-cleansing effort," JCP criticizes

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)  
March 25, 2009

Concerning Democratic Party of Japan (DPL) President Ozawa's announcement that he will remain in his post, Japanese Communist Party (JCP) Secretariat Head Tadayoshi Ichida on the evening of March 24 told reporters: "He did not give a rebuttal to the facts, based on which public prosecutors have indicted his secretary. He is responsible for clearing away suspicions. And yet, there is no evidence suggesting that either Mr. Ozawa or the party as a whole has made self-cleansing efforts. The DPJ stated in its manifesto that it will not receive donations from companies that receive orders for public works. It is necessary for Mr. Ozawa to explain why his party failed to keep its commitment."

Social Democratic Party Secretary General Yasumasa Shigeno also released a statement the same day, in which he pointed out: "It is serious that the state-funded first secretary to the head of the top party in the opposition camp was indicted over a charge of being involved in a political fund donation scandal. Since the party head announced that the party must not receive donations from companies and organizations, the party should unify views of its members and state a unified stance as its policy."

12) Ruling parties welcome Ozawa's decision to stay on as DPJ leader, seeing continuation of negative party image as good opportunity

ASAHI (Page 4) (Excerpts)  
March 25, 2009



Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Ozawa has stated his decision to stay on in his post after public prosecutors indicted his secretary over illegal political funds donations made by Nishimatsu Construction Co. A strange sense of relief now permeates the ruling camp. Many ruling party members are of the opinion that Prime Minister Aso will not be able to serve as a key person in the election campaign because of his low public support ratings. In the meantime, the DPJ is bound to continue to give a negative impression to voters due to the donation scandal. The ruling parties are determined to rattle the DPJ by hinting at Lower House dissolution in the spring.

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Chief Cabinet Secretary Kawamura during a press conference on March 24 pointed out Ozawa's supervisory responsibility. Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Secretary General Hiroyuki Hosoda told reporters, "I cannot possibly understand. He is not feeling that he is responsible." New Komeito Secretary General Kazuo Kitagawa also criticized Ozawa, "He failed to give an account of the facts that led to the indictment of his secretary."

However, their criticism of Ozawa is pro forma. If Ozawa had stepped down and the DPJ refreshed its image by choosing a new leader, an atmosphere in the LDP of replacing its own party leader could spread, reigniting moves to oust Aso. The prevailing view in the ruling camp is one of welcoming the decision by Ozawa to remain in office, as one member of the leadership said, "If Mr. Ozawa stays on, we can attack the DPJ, saying that he has yet to fulfill his accountability."

The LDP's basic policy course is to dissolve the Lower House after enacting the extra budget, according to an influential Upper House member. An atmosphere of supporting the prime minister until passage of the fiscal 2009 supplementary budget is beginning to build. An official close to the prime minister also hinted at the possibility of extending the regular session of the Diet, which is to go into recess on June 3, noting, "We will probably decide whether to extend the Diet session after the Golden Week consecutive holidays."

13) Six months since taking office: Prime minister eager to step up his offensive; Unconcerned about support ratings; Cherished motto is pretended endurance for sake of pride

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)  
March 25, 2009

It has been six months on March 24 since Prime Minister took office in September last year. Public support ratings for his cabinet remain sluggish due to his repeated gaffes and the like. However, moves to oust him have not yet kicked into high gear due to the arrest of Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Ozawa's secretary. The prime minister is eager to step up his offensive.

The prime minister on the 23rd told reporters about his impression of the six months since taking office: "I have done my utmost to compile economic stimulus measures. I feel I must continue this effort properly." His comment was in stark contrast with the remark given by Chief Cabinet Secretary Kawamura, his aide, who said, "I have been troubled due to such problems as sluggish public support ratings."

State Minister for Administrative Reform Amari, Aso's sworn friend, described him this way: "When a gloomy atmosphere is enveloping the entire country due to the economic crisis, his cheerful and undaunted character is good." When his secretary reported on cabinet support ratings, Aso often told him, "Why are you so conscious of public support ratings?" He thus ostensibly appears to be unconcerned about support ratings for his cabinet. When calls for Aso's resignation gained ground in late February, he indicated a bullish stance to persons around him, saying, "You will see that the moves will not spread." However, remarks, such as "his cheeks have sunken" or "he is losing his hair," are lingering. Aso's motto is to "value moral obligation and human feelings, and to endure for pride's sake." An aide to Aso said, "He is only pretending to be endure things."

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ZUMWALT